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STATE FOR AF/W-PDAVIS, PARIS FOR GD'ELIA, LONDON FOR RBELL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IV](#)

SUBJECT: COTE D IVOIRE: OUATTARA ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY

[11](#). (U) Former Ivorian Prime Minister and long-time President of the Rassemblement des Republicains (RDR) party Alassane Ouattara announced his candidacy for the Ivorian presidential election during an August 25 speech in Paris to RDR supporters in Europe. (Note: the date of the election has not yet been set. End Note) He promised his audience a "better" Cote d Ivoire and assured them that RDR will win the next election. Ouattara said there must be a limit to the length of time that the powers of the Chief Executive of Cote d Ivoire can be extended.

[12](#). (U) Ouattara said the RDR believes in peace, liberty, social justice, and solidarity. He announced that an RDR party congress has been scheduled for the end of 2007 and noted that the party has 700,000 members in Cote d Ivoire with 3,000 chapters and 30,000 local committees. He encouraged RDR party members to get on the electoral rolls.

[13](#). (U) Ouattara said RDR members need to work to ensure that the election is transparent and in conformity with international standards. Ouattara said the RDR is calling for transparency so that "the best will win" and assured his supporters that, if the election is transparent, the RDR will win. Ouattara said it is important to ensure that all steps in the electoral process are certified by a neutral party and added that he counts on the good will of Ouagadougou Political Accord (OPA) Facilitator and President of Burkina Faso Blaise Compaore to ensure the complete transparency of the election. Ouattara lamented the UN Security Council decision to eliminate the position of High Representative for Elections and said that position "was created in response to the complexity of Cote d Ivoires situation." Ouattara described the UN Security Councils decision as a step backward by the international community in relation to its earlier positions. Ouattara said the United Nations Operation in Cote d Ivoire (UNOCI) will inevitably be held responsible for any disorder that takes place as a result of a poorly organized election.

[14](#). (U) Ouattara noted that there are no problems between Cote d'Ivoire and France and invited French citizens who "wrongfully" and "disgracefully" had to depart Cote d Ivoire to return if they want to.

[15](#). (SBU) Comment. Ouattaras candidacy is not a surprise. It is interesting that he chose to announce it in Paris, where he spends a great deal of time, rather than in Cote d Ivoire. Ouattara did not attend the July 30 "Flame of Peace" ceremony in Bouake. The Ivorian political opposition, including the RDR, has been sidelined by the OPA.
AKUETTEH